

*Amendments to the Claims:*

Please amend the claims as set forth below.

1-31. (Canceled)

32. (Currently Amended) A lumbar support mechanism comprising:

a lumbar support element being flexible through a range of flexion, said lumbar support element having an upper portion and a lower portion;

an adjustment device operatively engaged with said upper portion and said lower portion of said lumbar support element such that adjustment of said adjustment device varies said flexion; and

two oppositely-oriented flap portions attached to said lumbar support element by two connecting webs, said connecting webs forming a substantially horizontal pivoting axis.

~~each flap portion having an elongated attachment edge at which said flap attaches to said lumbar support element, each of said flap portions having a medial axis extending approximately normal to said attachment edge, said flap portions being disposed in opposite directions with said medial axes being substantially vertical, said flap portions being defined by slots in said lumbar support element.~~

33. (Previously Presented) The lumbar support of claim 32 wherein said lumbar support element has a variable resilience.

34. (Previously Presented) The lumbar support of claim 33 wherein said variable resilience varies through said range of flexion such that increased flexion stiffens said variable resilience of said lumbar support element.

35. (Currently Amended) A lumbar support mechanism comprising:

a lumbar support element being flexible through a range of flexion, ~~said lumbar support element having a variable resilience, said variable resilience varying through said range of flexion such that increased flexion stiffens said variable resilience of said lumbar support element,~~ said lumbar support element having an upper portion and a lower portion;

an adjustment device operatively engaged with said upper portion and said lower portion of said lumbar support element such that adjustment of said adjustment device varies said flexion; and

a plurality of flap portions, at least two of said flap portions being disposed in opposite directions wherein said flap portions are ~~circumscribed~~ completely surrounded by said lumbar support element.

36. (Previously presented) The lumbar support of claim 35, wherein each of said flap portions is defined by a slot in said lumbar support element.

37. (Currently Amended) A lumbar support mechanism comprising:

a lumbar support element being flexible through a range of flexion, ~~said lumbar support element having a variable resilience, said variable resilience varying through said range of flexion such that increased flexion stiffens said variable resilience of said lumbar support element,~~ said lumbar support element having an upper portion and a lower portion;

an adjustment device operatively engaged with said upper portion and said lower portion of said lumbar support element such that adjustment of said adjustment device varies said flexion; and

a plurality of flap portions attached to said lumbar support element by a plurality of connecting webs, said connecting webs forming a substantially horizontal pivoting axis, each  
~~flap portion having an elongated attachment edge at which said flap attaches to said lumbar support element, each of said flap portions having a medial axis extending approximately normal to said attachment edge, at least two of said flap portions being disposed in opposite directions from one another and having their medial axes oriented vertically.~~

38. (Previously Presented) The lumbar support of claim 37 wherein said flap portions are defined by a slot in said lumbar support element.

39. (Previously Presented) The lumbar support of claim 38 wherein said plurality of flap portions is two flap portions.

40. (Previously Presented) The lumbar support of claim 38 wherein said slot is an open polygon.

41. (Previously Presented) The lumbar support of claim 38 wherein said slot is an open curve.

42. (Previously Presented) The lumbar support of claim 38 wherein said slot is a combination of an open polygon and an open curve.

43. (Previously Presented) The lumbar support of claim 32 wherein each of said flap portions is defined by a slot in said lumbar support element.

44. (Previously Presented) The lumbar support of claim 32 wherein each of said flap portions is defined by a slot in said lumbar support element, wherein said slot is an open polygon.

45. (Previously Presented) The lumbar support of claim 32 wherein each of said flap portions is defined by a slot in said lumbar support element, wherein said slot is an open curve.

46. (Previously Presented) The lumbar support of claim 32 wherein each of said flap portions is defined by a slot in said lumbar support element, wherein said slot is a combination of an open polygon and an open curve.

47. (Previously Presented) The lumbar support of claim 32 wherein each of said flap portions is integral with said lumbar support element.

48. (Currently amended) A lumbar support element comprising:

a flexible lumbar support element having an upper portion and a lower portion; and

a plurality of flaps attached to said flexible lumbar support element by a plurality of connecting webs, said connecting webs forming a substantially horizontal pivoting axis, each ~~flap having an attachment edge at which said flap attaches to said lumbar support element, each of said flaps having a medial axis extending approximately normal to said attachment edge, at least two of said flaps being disposed in opposite directions with said medial axes being substantially vertical, said flaps being circumscribed completely surrounded by slots in said~~ lumbar support element.

49. (Previously Presented) The lumbar support mechanism of claim 48 wherein said plurality of flaps is two flaps.

50. (Previously Presented) The lumbar support mechanism of claim 48 wherein said flaps are integral to said flexible lumbar support element.

51. (Previously Presented) The lumbar support mechanism of claim 48 wherein said flexible lumbar support element and said flaps are made of plastic.

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52. (Previously Presented) The lumbar support mechanism of claim 48 wherein said flexible lumbar support element and said flaps are made of sheet metal.